First Things

APRIL 2025

The Newsletter of First Evangelical Lutheran Church
561 Chestnut Street | Taylors Falls, MN 55084-1110
651-465-5265 www.tflutheran.org

Dear Friends,

As we journey toward Easter, I find myself reflecting on this past month—a month of renewal, of listening, of exploration. It has been a time of opening our hearts to where the Spirit is leading, of stepping into opportunities that stretch and grow us, and of deepening our shared ministry.

On a personal note, this season has been profoundly life-giving for me. To experience what God is doing in two different congregations, each with its own unique context yet united in Christ's mission, has been a humbling and energizing gift.

Easter will mark the halfway point in our **90-Day Shared Ministry Plan**, a milestone that invites us to pause and reflect on the work of the Spirit in our midst. I hope that, like me, you have found this journey to be one of growth, renewal, and joy. Through the guidance of Pastor Dwight, the faithfulness of each of you, and the work we do together, I see the Spirit breathing new life into our communities.

And now, we prepare to celebrate the greatest renewal of all—the resurrection of Christ! Easter is not just an event we remember; it is a reality we live into each and every day. Christ's resurrection **brings new life, fresh hope, and unshakable joy**, not just on Easter morning but in every moment we walk in faith together.

I hope you will join us as we worship and celebrate our Risen Savior:

6:00am Sunrise Service – Meet at the Immanuel's **Labyrinth** to welcome the dawn of hope.

9:00am Easter Worship at Immanuel – Celebrate with Immanuel **choir and brass**, lifting high the name of Jesus!

11:00am Easter Worship at First in Taylors Falls – with Joint Choir another beautiful chance to rejoice in the risen Christ!

Blessings,

Pastor Justin

Yesterday as Pastor Justin was preaching, I was reminded of the documentary film I AM. My youngest daughter Emily brought this film to my attention after she watched it during the January-Term class she attended her freshman year.

The story is about Tom Shadyac, a man who had it all until something happened to make him realize he might have it all…wrong. After a near-death cycling accident, this Hollywood film director Shadyac, decided to spark a conversation around two basic questions: what's wrong with the world, and what can we do about it?

And so Shadyac traveled the globe interviewing some of the greatest thinkers and spiritual leaders at the time. And while he may have been filming a documentary, his film reveals a plot twist straight out of a blockbuster movie. That twist offered scientific proof that we are all connected; that Darwin's theory of "Survival of the Fittest" isn't correct and was actually never really stressed by Darwin at all.

By the final scene, it's clear that while he started out asking what's wrong with our world, he ended up discovering what's right with it. And the answer to both is the title of the fill, "I AM."

I Am what's wrong with the world, because I miss that cooperation and community is what is central to the function of our world. Not what is so much more prevalent which is a "What's in it for me" attitude. So, given that, what's the solution? Well, I AM, you and I are the answer to the world's challenges. You and I working together, in community, being the church, is what will fix things.

It's exactly what Pastor Justin was talking about, it is what the Apostle Paul was talking about when he wrote:

Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God—what is good and acceptable and perfect. For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of yourself more highly than you ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned. ~ Romans 12:2-3

This has Lenten Journey written all over it to me. I AM…YOU ARE what's wrong with the world (Confession). BUT GOD has come to us, journeyed with us, died and rose (Absolution)…SO THAT…I AM and YOU ARE the extension of God's hands and voice that will make this world right again.

May God grant us the courage and wisdom to admit our need to repent, and to turn and follow boldly and compassionately. I think you know this, but the world needs us, the world needs you and me!

Pastor Dwight Rudquist

APRIL BIRTHDAYS

04/06 Rod Olson
04/07 Jenni Brown
04/07 Miranda Tverberg
04/11 Molly Moberg
04/16 Amelia Tverberg
04/16 Vince Tverberg
04/25 Joy Buchholtz
04/26 Jeanne Fick
04/28 Lorie Stolp
04/30 Ruth Steinwall

Please contact the church office if there are any errors or omissions. Thank you.

New Members Welcome!

If you are interested in becoming a member, please talk with Pr. Dwight or contact the office at 651-465-5265.

SUNDAY WORSHIP

Worship every Sunday at 9:00am. Recorded services from Sunday morning worship are available Sunday afternoons on our website www.tflutheran.org and can also be found on our YouTube Channel: First Evangelical Lutheran Church of TF - 2nd.

COUNCIL MEETING

Council will meet April 13, 2025 at 12:00pm.

MONTHLY GIVING REPORT

Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. —2 Cor. 9:7 (NIV)

Budgeted Weekly Expenses: $2771.60

03/02 Giving:	$3,695.00
03/09 Giving:	$2,007.00
03/16 Giving:	$2,210.00
03/23 Giving:	$2,951.00

Thank you for your faithful giving. Please contact FELC Treasurer, Craig Loen with any questions or concerns at: 715-553-0519 or cloen@federatedcoops.com

What's Happening in Our Church!

Every Sunday: Worship at 9am followed by Fellowship at 10am.

Bible Study: Sunday mornings following fellowship. Grab a cup of coffee & join us for Bible Study.

Church Choir

Talk with Pr. Dwight for information on practices. No experience needed! Check out the schedule in fellowship room. We'd love for you to join us!!!

Quilting

First & Third Wednesday mornings at 9:30am. No experience needed! We welcome new quilters!!!

SundaySCHOOL

Monthly Sunday school class for children ages 3-6. Meets the second Sunday of the month right after the children's message.

Next SS Date: April 13th

Prayer Shawl Ministry

If you'd like to be part of this new ministry or have any questions, please talk with Becky Hulden.

CRAFTING all day

CRAFTING ON SATURDAYS

SAT, APRIL 12TH | 9:00AM - 2:00PM

BRING YOUR CRAFTS, A SNACK TO SHARE & BE READY FOR SOME GREAT CONVERSATIONS!! INVITE A FRIEND!

Join us on

Palm Sunday for a
Pancake Breakfast!

Sunday, April 13th at 10:00am

First Evangelical Lutheran Church

If you are interested in helping, please talk with a council member!

Summer 2025

As a ministry within the ELCA, Luther Point Bible Camp is called to live into the wonder of God's creation. We strive to create a safe and nurturing environment for all people to come and have an experience with the Holy Trinity: God the Creator, Jesus the Redeemer and the Spirit who sustains us.

We believe that Jesus meets us where we are, who we are and loves us as we are. As a camp we strive to live out Jesus' command to love one another.

One of the many ways that we provide a safe and loving space for our campers and staff is to allow all people to identify as they are.

Member Church Discounts

This discount applies if you are a member of one of Luther Point's 75 member congregations and your congregation contributed their full per-baptized member assessment in 2024.

$55 Member Discount | $15 Early Bird, Register by April 1, 2025

Luther Point
BIBLE CAMP

Applications are OPEN for

Summer 2025 Staff

Looking for:

- Junior Counselors
- Senior Counselors
- Camp Connect Counselors
- Team Leaders
- Support Staff
- Medic & Waterfront Team Leader

Luther Point
BIBLE CAMP

WHAT'S HAPPENING IN OUR COMMUNITY

Chisago Lakes Friends of the Library Book Sale

Join the Chisago Lakes Friends of the Library for our Spring Book Sale! The sale will be held:
Thurs, April 10th 10am to 8pm;
Fri, April 11th 10am to 6pm;
Sat, April 12th 10am to 4pm

Join Pr. Dwight on
Friday, April 25th from 12:30 - 2:30pm
to pack meals for hungry children. More information and a sign up sheet can be found on the bulletin bard.

CHISAGO LAKES
COMMUNITY MEAL

Chisago Lakes Community Meal

Monday Evenings
4pm - 6pm
Zion Lutheran Church
in Chisago City

INTERSTATE PARK WORK PLAY EARTH DAY

Saturday, April 26th
9:00am - 12:00pm

Help park staff get the South Campground ready for the upcoming season. Volunteers can help by picking up garbage, cleaning fire rings, cutting brush, and helping in debris removal from hazard trees.

Volunteers should meet at the gate to the south campground at 9 a.m. Tools, garbage bags, etc., will be provided by park staff. Volunteers should wear outdoor work clothes, boots, gloves and have a water bottle.

Council Meeting Minutes

Church Council of First Evangelical Lutheran Church
March 23, 2025
Next meeting April 13, 2025, after worship-noon
May Meeting: May 11, 2025

"Proclaim the Gospel and Serve our neighbors."

Council Members: Rose Anderson, Kathy Carlsted, Don Hansen, Becky Hulden, Craig Loen, Julie Valez, Pastor Dwight Rudquist, Pastor Justin Fenger

A. **Opening Devotions –** Don
April Devotions—Kathy

B. Sharing Stories of God's Love in our Lives –Rose, Rita and Becky attended meeting in Stillwater, Holy Spirit was at work creating new ideas and possibilities on what is possible at First Lutheran continuing in the spirit of the season of renewal

C. Pastor's Report- Pastor Dwight-see attached below. Dwight will do one more round of in home visits.
Tool kit report-Wendy Becky and Dwight attended

D. Sunday School –No Report

E. Treasurer's Report – Craig distributed detailed report. No major changes or causes for concern, This report is in the office for inspection by all members. Julie move to accept the Treasurers report and Kathy seconded it and the motion carried
Lenten offering-Kathy made a motion to donate this years Lenten offerings to Family Pathways, and Feed our Starving Children. Rose seconded.

F. Grounds Committee Projects
Rose moved to approve Jeremy Vitalis to remove the buried fuel tank, cost was $2500 Craig seconded. Funds to provided by account 3235 undesignated memorials

G. Vision Group

1. Season of Renewal – FELC group met 3/19. Final report will be done for 3/29
2. Next meeting: March 29, 2025 final gathering. Rita and Becky will be reporting on it.
3. Inviting Worship and Welcoming Training – 3/22/25, Stillwater – Rita, Rose and Becky attended. There was interest to continue the Season of renewal task force may continue into 2025/26.

H. 90-day Pilot with Immanuel

1. The second evaluation meeting is set for 3/26 at 9 AM here at FELC.
2. Choir Coordination has been going well
3. Comments- There have been no negative comments., Pastor Fenger commented that there has been little change for ILC in regard to programs, but large change in regard to renewed and new member relationships among the churches. One plus One equals Three!!

I. Coverage for Angie's Absence

1. Bulletins - status
2. Newsletters - status
3. JuVideos – Pay Carli- Needs a W-9
4. Angie's PTO – Motion by Craig to continue to supplement Angie's hours to 32 hours per week from March 3 through April 30. Julie seconded

J. Prep for May 18th

1. Worship
    1. Music-Dwight picked Music, and organized service,
    2. Special guests
2. Fellowship- Lunch will be served

K. Mission Statement

1. Mission moments – Rose – Cards and letters Mission
2. Julie – Library Mission – completed in January

L. Report on events:

1. Mi-Chi-Lu Fat Tuesday Pancake Feast – $1,183.00 raised

M. Upcoming Events: FELC pancake breakfast palm Sunday, joint choirs singing

N. Motion to Adjourn-Kathy and Julie

Pastor Dwight's Report on page 10

Pastor Rudquist's Council Report – March 23, 2025

Participated in Worship:

February 16, 2025
February 23, 2025
March 2, 2025
March 5, 2025 - Ash Wednesday at both Congregations
March 9, 2025 - Both Congregations
March 12, 2025 - Wednesday Lenten Services at both Congregations
March 16, 2025 (At Trinity in Lindstrom)
March 19, 2025 - Wednesday Lenten Service

Visits:

In person visit with:

Darlene Mueller
Janet Shepherdson
Cynthia Holmberg
Orval Curry

Phone visits with:

Funerals:

Other:

Church Council - 2/12/2025
Choir Practices 2/12, 2/26, 3/19
Joint Choir with Immanuel 2/25, 3/18
Choir Sang on 2/23, 3/2
Bulletins for 2/9, 2/16, 2/23, 3/2, 3/9, 3/16
Produced and Mailed March Newsletter
Service at The Lodge – February 26th
What's Next Task Group Meetings – 2/12, 3/19
Attended Synod Tool Kit 2/22
MICHILU – Fat Tuesday Pancake Dinner-$1183.00 went to MN Lutheran social service.
First Communion Instruction for Cullen Luschen

Thoughts/Reflections:

My Continued Role During the Pilot Program?
Helpful Ways to End My Time with FELC?

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Pastor Justin Fenger
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pastor@immanuelalmelund.com

Angie Linngren
Ministry Coordinator,
felctf@gmail.com

2024-2025 Council/Officers:

Becky Hulden—President
Kathy Carlsted—Vice President
Craig Loen—Treasurer
Don Hansen—Secretary
Julie Valez
Rose Anderson

Financial Secretary
Jerry Rhoads

Please hold the ministers and council members in your prayers that God would give them the wisdom, strength, courage, patience and perseverance to serve this community of faith as they lead us in our mission for the sake of the world and the glory of God.

Next council meeting will be on April 13, 2025 at 12:00pm.

Mission Statement

Proclaim the Gospel and Serve our Neighbors.

(Mission Statement approved 2023)

"Lord, you have been our dwelling place in all generations."

Psalm 90:1

Please send submissions to: felctf@gmail.com
Articles due the 10th of each month.

First Evangelical
LUTHERAN CHURCH

561 Chestnut Street, Taylors Falls, MN 55084-1110

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